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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

A STUDY OF THE FIRST FRENCH

AUDIO-COMPREHENSION DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATION IN ALBERTA

Submitted by  
Pierre A.R. Monod  
to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of Master of Education  
Department of Secondary Education

A THESIS

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PIERRE A.R. MONOD

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Study of the First French Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination in Alberta", submitted by Pierre A.R. Monod in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.



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## ABSTRACT

This study of the First French Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination in Alberta had a twofold object: first to analyse the linguistic content of the instrument in order to verify that the test as a whole, and that each of the forty nine items, actually tested the understanding of an oral message; second to examine the validity, reliability, scorability, administrability, and economy of the instrument.

One hundred and eighty students of two Edmonton Senior High Schools took the examination twice. One teacher in each school was responsible for gathering the aural scores of the year for those students and for administering the test two weeks before the departmental examination.

The test was investigated on the basis of its difficulty level and of the consistency of the score of all students for a majority of items. Then, the test results were compared to those of the retest, finally the annual results were contrasted with those of the examination.

The findings of the study may be summarized as follows: the validity, reliability, scorability, administrability, and economy of the instrument were found to be satisfactory. The linguistic analysis revealed



that a wide range of language problems was tested in the time allotted.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Mr. P.A. Lamoureux in his thesis The Application of Linguistic Principles to the Teaching of a First Year Course in High School French recommends further investigation into the preparation of standardized achievement tests in French for Alberta students in which the four language skills are tested.<sup>1</sup>

In 1964, a committee chaired by Dr. B.E. Walker prepared a first draft for an Audio-Comprehension Examination in French at the end of Grade XII. This test was administered in twenty schools in Edmonton and Calgary. As a result of this pilot examination the Alberta Department of Education decided to include, in 1965, an audio-comprehension measure as part of the Grade XII Departmental French Examination.

The 1964 pilot examination consisted of two parts: part one was designed to test the audio-discriminatory ability of pupils in French; part two, to test their ability in understanding a French oral message recorded on tape.

The first part required the student to differentiate one phoneme from the other as he listened to three utterances of minimal pairs; for example:

fou, fu, fou;



or

Ma maison a dix étages,  
Ma maison a deux étages,  
Ma maison a dix étages.

The second part required the student, after having listened to a question, or to the lead of a sentence, to give evidence of his understanding of the oral message by checking the answer or completion which best fitted.

The following is an example wherein the stimulus is a question.

Quand Marie est-elle venue?

Possible alternatives:

1. Elle est venue ici.
2. Elle est venue en avion.
3. Elle est venue avant-hier.
4. Elle est venue avec moi.

The correct answer is number three. The other alternatives are distractors sufficiently similar to be selected by the less knowledgeable student.

The following is another example wherein the stimulus is the head of a sentence.

Hier, en classe . . .

Possible completions:

1. Je regarde mon professeur.
2. Je regarderai mon professeur.
3. J'ai regardé mon professeur.
4. Je regarderais mon professeur.

The correct completion is number three.



## 1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The 1965 French Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination of Alberta was designed to test the auditory skill of students through audio-discrimination and audio-comprehension items. The forty-nine item instrument consisted of four parts: in part one audio-discrimination only was tested; audio-comprehension was tested in parts two, three and four. The test items were recorded on magnetic tape by two native speakers of French, teachers of French as a second language.

The use of the tapes throughout the province made it possible for all the students to be tested by listening to standard French spoken at normal speed, with proper rhythm, intonation and stress. Each utterance was made once only as in normal spoken communication.

In Part One students were not required to give evidence of understanding but only of the accuracy of their hearing of French sounds. Each item consisted of three utterances A, B, and C which were presented orally only; students were asked to check the letter which corresponded to that utterance which differed from the two others. If the three utterances were all different they were asked to check the letter D on their answer sheet. In this study, for clarity's sake, the correct answer will be underlined in all subsequent examples.



1. A) Il m'a conduit.  
 B) Il m'a conduit.  
 C) Il m'a conduite.

These utterances were heard, not seen; the students saw A B C D on their answer sheet and in this case were to check C.

2. A) J'ai un billet.  
 B) J'eus un billet.  
 C) J'ai eu un billet.

The correct answer was identified by checking the D on the answer sheet, which corresponded to "three different utterances".

In Part Two students heard a question. On their answer sheet they checked the best of the four possible answers A, B, C and D.

Example: Que fait un élève le lundi?

Having heard this question, the students read the following four possible answers:

- A) Il fait du ski.  
 B) Il fait un vol sans escale.  
 C) Il ne va pas à l'école.  
 D) Il va en classe.

D being the best possible answer was to be checked.

In Part Three the students were required to identify the best possible of four completions to a common sentence beginning. They read the four possible alternative endings A, B, C and D and checked the letter corresponding to the best possible completion.

Example: Un élève paresseux est . . .



Having heard this lead the students read the four following possible alternatives:

- A) Celui qui fait bien ses devoirs.
- B) Celui qui ne travaille pas.
- C) Celui qui apprend ses leçons.
- D) Celui qui écoute le professeur.

B being the best possible completion was to be checked.

In Part Four the students made their choice by inference rather than just by completing a sentence as in Part Three. They had to think in order to choose the best possible alternative corresponding to the situation evoked by the lead they heard. They read the four alternatives A, B, C and D on their answer sheet and checked the letter corresponding to the most suitable one.

Example: Je traverse le lac,

Having heard this lead the students read the four possible completions:

- A) Je prends un bateau.
- B) Je prends un avion.
- C) Je prends une auto.
- D) Je prends une bicyclette.

A being the best possible inference was to be checked.

### 1.3 PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The present study attempted to evaluate the Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination given in 1965 to the students of French 30 of the Province of Alberta by 1) studying its validity, 2) estimating its reliability,



and 3) studying its scorability, administrability and economy.

1. To study the validity of the test the following criteria were used:

a) Content Validity.

The content validity of a test "is determined by the extent to which the items in the test adequately sample the areas of subject matter and the abilities which a course of instruction has aimed to teach."<sup>2</sup> In this study, content validity was tested by means of a detailed linguistic analysis of each item. The purpose of this analysis was threefold: first to identify the specific language problems of Anglo-phones learning French; second, to verify that these problems pertained to the Grade XII program; third, to ascertain whether the vocabulary used in the test was contained in the Grade XII textbook.

b) Empirical Validity.

Empirical validity "refers to the relation between test scores and a criterion, the latter being an independent and direct measure of that which the test is designed to predict."<sup>3</sup> In this study the year's mean scores in auditory comprehension tests administered to eighty-four students of the Ross Sheppard Composite High School, Edmonton, were compared with the scores they obtained on the French Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination.

2. To estimate the reliability of the test the following



criteria were used:

a) Test-Retest Correlation.

This coefficient of reliability is calculated by "correlating scores for the same students on two administrations of the same test. The size of a test-retest reliability coefficient indicates not only the precision of measurement of the test, but also the stability of the trait being measured."<sup>4</sup> However, this coefficient is influenced by variables stemming from student behaviours and environmental factors; therefore, the test-retest reliability coefficient was corroborated by calculating the coefficient of internal consistency.

b) Coefficient of Internal Consistency.

The coefficient of internal consistency of a test is calculated as a function of the level of difficulty of each item on the test. In this study the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 was used:

$$r = \frac{K}{K-1} \left[ 1 - \frac{\sum pq}{\sigma^2} \right]$$

where according to Ebel "K represents the number of items on the test, p stands for the proportion of the responses to one item which is correct and q the proportion of the responses which are not correct,  $\sigma^2$  represents the variance of the scores on the test."<sup>5</sup> This formula yields a coefficient of reliability which indicates "the consistency in the student's test performance on different items."<sup>6</sup>



3. To study the scorability of the test the following criteria were used:

a) Objectivity of the test; that is, were the correct answers chosen so that when the test was administered to experts their scores were at least ninety-five percent of the possible score as recommended by Lado.<sup>7</sup>

b) Suitability of the test for IBM machine scoring.

4. To study the administrability of the test the following criteria were used:

a) The choice of speakers recording the French Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination was evaluated to determine the distinctness with which they spoke and their voice intensity.

b) The homogeneity of emission could be reached through the use of clear tapes and quality tape recorders.

c) Simplicity of use of material considering the machines needed.

5. The economy of the test was studied by dividing the time allotted to the Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination by the number of items composing it. This result was compared to generally recommended proportion of time to items.



#### 1.4 HYPOTHESES

1. The test may be assumed sufficiently valid if the examination tests language problems and not isolated vocabulary items, grammatical rules, and translation; if the vocabulary and all the structures found in the test can also be found in the Grade XII textbook Senior French;<sup>8</sup> if the coefficient of correlation between the scores obtained on the audio-comprehension departmental examination and the score obtained over the year in audio-comprehension tests is above .50 as stated by Adams.<sup>9</sup>

2. The test may be considered sufficiently reliable if the coefficient of correlation between the first and the second administrations of the same test shows that the consistency of scores is confirmed by the results obtained through the study of the Internal Consistency Method; if the coefficient of correlation between each item and all the other items ranges between .80 and .89 as stated by Lado.<sup>10</sup>

3. The test is scorable if the scoring is rapid and accurate; if it allows no subjective marking.

4. The test is administrable if it provides the same listening situation for all students being tested; if the material is easily manipulated by the examiner.

5. The test is economical if the proportion of items tested in twenty minutes on the Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination compares favourably with other multiple



choice examinations in which speed is not a discriminating factor.

### 1.5 DEFINITIONS

The Instrument referred to is the first French Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination of French in the Province of Alberta administered as a dry-run in June 1965.

The language is language in de Saussure's terms, at the phonemic level of differentiation as distinguished from language at the phonetic level. "La langue est l'ensemble des habitudes qui permettent à un sujet de comprendre et de se faire comprendre."<sup>11</sup> It is also "language in use", i.e. everyday language, at normal speed.

Standard French is any variety of that language spoken by educated speakers from any of the regions where it is spoken natively.<sup>12</sup>

Audio-discrimination is the capacity of the hearer to differentiate a) one phonemic sound from the other (for example, the French /i/ from the French /y/ and the French /y/ from the French /u/), and b) the phonemic intonation of two otherwise similar phrases (for example, "il aime la mer." with a descending intonation for a declarative statement, and "Il aime la mer?" with an ascending intonation for a question).

Audio-discrimination requires no understanding of the



meaning of the structure but reveals that the ear has been conditioned to perceive sounds which are specifically French and to distinguish them one from the other. In Robert Lado's words,

Experience shows that when the native language has one phoneme in a phonetic area in which the foreign language has two the learner finds major difficulty learning to pronounce the two phonemes of the foreign language; and what is less well known, he has difficulty hearing the difference even when his hearing is quite normal.<sup>13</sup>

Audio-comprehension is the capacity of the hearer to understand the utterance he hears and to give evidence of his understanding by choosing one of the answers or completions which he reads on his answer sheet.

The language problems are all those constructions wherein French or English departs from the anticipated parallellism in construction, as for example the following case:

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) he is intelligent | il est intelligent |
| 2) he is tall        | il est grand       |
| 3) he is hot         | il <u>a</u> chaud  |

Number (3) in French represents a language problem for an English speaking student as it interrupts an established pattern. The habit of using the equivalent of "to be" in French will interfere with the acquisition of a new format. It follows from the above that language problems are caused by the interference of a set of acquired habits in the mother tongue with the acquisition of a set of new habits in the



target language. Consequently, language problems will vary according to the skill which is being tested: auditory language problems are different from problems of language production. The eliciting of the correct answer to "Quelle heure est-il?" (which is "Il est . . .") is a production problem rather than an auditory comprehension one. To ask a student to react to the following utterance by choosing an answer from his answer sheet is an auditory problem, because "dix" may be confused with "douze" and "deux" plus a "liaison":

Question: Avez-vous deux élèves?

Answer: Oui, j'en ai douze.  
 Oui, j'en ai dix.  
 Oui, j'en ai deux.

Lado defines these specific language difficulties as "those units and patterns that do not have a counterpart in the native language or that have counterparts with structurally different distribution or meaning."<sup>14</sup>

## 1.6 THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS STUDY

In Chapter Two the validity of the instrument is investigated in terms of Content Validity and Empirical Validity.

Chapter Three describes the investigation of the test reliability researched through the Test-Retest method verified by the Internal Consistency Method. The results



yielded by a general analysis are also considered.

In Chapter Four is presented the study carried out on the scorability of the instrument together with its administrability, and economy.

Chapter Five summarizes conclusions and offers recommendations and some suggestions for further study.

### 1.7 LIMITATIONS

1. This study does not propose to establish a correlation between the written Grade XII French final examination results and those obtained on the French Audio-Comprehension Departmental Examination.

2. This study does not compare the achievement of rural and city students.

3. This study does not compare the results on the French final examination with general performance on the final examinations.



## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE.

1. Lamoureux, A.Ph. The Application of Linguistic Principles to the Teaching of a First Year Course in High School French, Edmonton, University of Alberta, Department of Secondary Education, May 1964, p. 173.
2. Ebel, Robert, L. Measuring Educational Achievement, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965, p. 447.
3. Anastasi, Anne. Psychological Testing, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1954, p. 127.
4. Ebel. op. cit., p. 467.
5. Ebel. op. cit., p. 318.
6. Adams, Georgia, Sachs. Measurement and Evaluation in Education, Psychology and Guidance, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 87.
7. Lado, Robert. Language Testing, London, Longmans Green and Company Ltd., 1962, p. 47.
8. O'Brien, K.L., Lafrance, M.A., Jones, C. Meredith. Senior French, Toronto, Ginn and Company, 1963.
9. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 171.
10. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 332.
11. de Saussure, F. Cours de Linguistique Générale, Publié par Charles Bally et Albert Secheaye avec la collaboration de Albert Riedlinger, 4ème éd., Paris, Payot, 1949, p. 112.
12. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 47.
13. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 14.
14. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 24.



## CHAPTER TWO

### VALIDITY

The validity of a test is generally defined as "the accuracy with which it measures that which it is intended to measure, or as the degree to which it approaches infallibility in measuring what it purports to measure."<sup>15</sup>

The above definition of validity applied to second language testing of audio-discrimination and audio-comprehension can be re-stated in the following terms: the validity of the instrument under study can be defined in terms of the accuracy with which it measures student ability to discriminate between French sounds as well as that of giving evidence of understanding oral messages based on the material covered during Grade XII.

In the province of Alberta the material covered in Grade XII is contained in the textbook Senior French; therefore, the instrument was analysed so as to show a) that it contained only material belonging to the course of study, and b) that within this material only language problems were tested because "Testing the problems is testing the language."<sup>16</sup>

To summarize, the validity of the instrument was checked a) by analysing the content of the instrument, and b) by comparing the students' scores on the instrument to



their year's mean score on audio-comprehension tests.

## 2.1 CONTENT VALIDITY

The content validity of the instrument was first checked by analysing each item linguistically in order to determine the language problem it contained; then came the verification that each problem pertained to the Grade XII program, and finally that the vocabulary used in the test was to be found in the Grade XII textbook.

Linguistic analysis of items.

Each item of the instrument was analysed to isolate the language problem involved. It is important that each problem be linguistically valid, for as Lado says:

A test...that...does not test the elements of language is not valid. On the other hand, a test that tests the elements of language but does it by lists or rules or technical names rather than in use in essentially communicative situations is not a valid test either.

Also, a test that has good language content and appears to use essentially linguistic situations will not be valid if it introduces a very heavy intelligence factor, or a heavy memory factor, or some other element that cancels out the language content and the valid situation.<sup>17</sup>

### Part One, Audio-Discrimination.

The study of Part One revealed that the items typically sought to show the students' ability to detect distinctions between phonemic sounds not generally encountered in English. The detailed analysis of the



linguistic elements of this part are to be found in Appendix A.

Items 1, 2, and 12 required the students to recognize the feminine forms of past participles or adjectives.

Items 3 and 7 demanded that students distinguish consonant sounds one from the other, as in item 3, or their distribution as in item 7.

Items 4, 6, 8 and 11 dealt with the recognition of different tense forms.

Items 5 and 9 tested the discrimination between French vowel sounds.

Item 10 asked students to recognize two different interrogative forms, the one requiring a person for an answer, the other a non-person.

Item 13 was the most difficult one as students were to discover a double differentiation: a) between singular and plural verbs, b) between unaccented vowel sounds.

To summarize, the content of Part One of the instrument may be considered valid as it tests in context auditory-discrimination ability of students by submitting them to a large variety of problems such as the differences

- between the presence or absence of final consonant-sounds in two out of thirteen items,

- between /ə/ and /a/ in accented positions in one item,

- between /ə/ and /a/ in non-accented positions in two items,



- between front vowels: /e/ and /y/; /i/, /ø/, and /e/;  
/y/ and /ø/ in three items,
- between nasal vowels such as /ã/ and /ɔ̃/ and nasal  
vowels such as /ẽ/ and their oral counterpart /ɛ/  
followed by a nasal consonant in two items,
- between the presence and the absence of /r/ in one item,
- between the difference of consonants voiced and unvoiced  
such as /k/ and /g/; /t/ and /d/ in one item,
- between the presence or the absence of /j/ in one item.

From the above it is apparent that not all the auditory-problems met by an English speaker learning French were tested; however, a fair sampling of major problems was given.

#### Part Two, Three and Four, Audio-Comprehension.

As these three parts of the instrument deal with the same skill, i.e. giving evidence of understanding the oral question or lead, it has been decided to analyse them by grouping of different language elements under the headings: vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, grammar. Culture, though not a language element, was tested as it is part of the Grade XII course of studies. A detailed analysis of the linguistic elements of these parts is found in Appendix A.

##### a) Vocabulary

The aural comprehension of six nouns, three adjectives and one verb was tested in context. Students were to give



evidence of their understanding of the alternatives they read, each of the four alternatives involved the knowledge of more nouns, adjectives and verbs. For example, in item 14 the adjective "fatiguée" is being tested through the knowledge of four verbs, three nouns and an adverb.

Item 14 - "fatiguée" (adjective)

Item 15 - "un commerçant" (noun)

Item 16 - "le facteur" (noun)

Item 17 - "des symphonies" (noun)

Item 27 - "recule" (verb)

Item 28 - "couvert" (adjective)

Item 29 - "les vacances" (noun)

Item 39 - "élégante" (adjective)

Item 40 - "la bibliothèque" (noun)

Item 41 - "des invités" (noun)

#### b) Idiomatic expressions

Item 18 - "mal à l'estomac"

Item 19 - "ont-ils lieu"

Item 20 - "fait le ménage"

Item 21 - "se lève de table"

Item 30 - "se met en marche"

Item 31 - "bon marché"

Item 32 - "j'ai tort"

Item 42 - "elle fait la vaisselle"

Item 43 - "nous sommes pressés"



Item 44 - "de bonne heure"

Item 45 - "dresse un procès verbal"

### c) Grammar

Six items measured the knowledge of tense agreement in French; one item dealt with the usage of the disjunctive pronoun and one the appropriate use of the pronoun-adverb "y".

Item 22 - future followed by future.

Item 23 - disjunctive pronouns.

Item 24 - equivalence of near future and future.

Item 33 - "si" plus imperfect followed by conditional.

Item 34 - subjunctive mood followed by indicative present after "si".

Item 35 - imperfect in main and subordinate clauses.

Item 46 - equivalence of recent past and past definite.

Item 47 - "y" pronoun-adverb.

Item 48 - personal pronouns. (discarded because of a printing mistake)

### d) General culture

One item dealt with literature, three with history and three with general knowledge of customs,

Item 25 - "Corneille"

Item 26 - "Louis XIV"

Item 36 - "Le Moyen Age"



Item 37 - "Vercingétorix"

Item 38 - "un vitrail"

Item 49 - "des foires"

Item 50 - "du chômage"

The second part of the analysis of validity by content consists in checking whether the words used in the audio-comprehension test are found in the textbook used by the students in Grade XII. A list of the words used in the test and the page reference to Senior French follows:

#### ITEM LIST - Vocabulary

		page		page
	A		bétail	217
accident		147	bibliothèque	6
apporter		194	bien	93
arrêter		109	bon marché	104
s'arrêter		143		C
arriver		35	cahier	
attendre		4	calé	144
attention (faire)		47	céréales	
auto		145	château	68
avocat		1	chaussure	94
	B		chien	194
beaucoup de		168	chimie	213
belle		35	chômage	162



cinéma		écrivain	211
client	7	élégant	10
commerçant	7	employé des postes	88
commis	156	épicier	267
compositeur	77	estomac	183
concert	175	examen	14
conduit	146	exportation	
se coucher	6		F
couper		fabriquant	98
courir	44	facteur	88
courrier		aller faire	262
cravate		faire le ménage	195
cuisine		fatiguer	4
	D	fin	44
dactylo	232	foire	218
début	2	fusée interplanétaire	161
demain	57		G
déplaie (plaire,p.60)		grand magasin	95
devoirs	97		H
dîner	186	s'habiller	428
dire	33	haut	
division géographique		héros	65
dormir	187	heureux	10
	E	hier	61
économie	162		I
		invité	118



## J

jardin	
jeune	10
jour	155
journaux	7

## L

lentement	155
livre	
lourd	

## M

malheureux	10
marché	218
marcher	
match	109
médecin	10
mère	13
se mettre en marche	145
midi	183
milieu	88
musique	77

## N

nuage	
nuit	44

## O

omelette	198
ouvrir	

## P

partir	44
peindre (dépeindre, p.71)	
pièce de théâtre	77
il pleut	176
pointu	
porte	237
poulet	183
prendre	4
prendre un café	26
pressé (être)	183
problème	168
province	65

## Q

question	195
question du chômage	57

## R

rabais	94
ralentir	144
reculer	144
regarder	121
régner	208
repas	183
revue	161
roman	266



## S

salle de bains

salon

sculpture 70

ce soir 31

soleil 176

symphonie 77

## T

télévision 26

thé 168

train 47

travailler 59

tour 60

## U

usine 263

## V

vacances 26

vendre 4

vent 176

vieillesse

vin 168

virer 144

vite 155

vitraux 71

voiture 143

voter 197



<u>Expressions</u>	<u>page</u>		
à la campagne	223	une fois par jour	132
faire des affaires	1	faire un voyage	156
assez manger	19	prendre un café	153
aller en arrière		jeudi prochain	30
aller en avant		journée scolaire	1
quelle chance!	206	tant pis	44
de bonne heure	30	trop tard	268
quel dommage!		toutes les semaines	170
dresser un procès verbal		le temps est couvert	176
	232	elle se tient mal	246
cinq heures <u>du</u> matin		avoir tort	30
		trop mangé	122
du soir	231	trouver beau	102
en ville (la ville, p. 194)			
être fatigué	4		
faire la vaisselle	186		
en été	110		
en hiver	30		
il y a trois jours	229		
jouer aux cartes	119		
je le vois le mardi	173		
se lever de table	185		
avoir lieu			
mal à (l'estomac)	20		
quel malheur	10		
se mettre en marche	145		



There are twenty-three words which could not be located in Senior French. Out of these fifteen were previous acquisitions; of the eight remaining words three are similar to English and the others are of current usage.

<u>Grammar</u>	Page
disjunctive pronouns	148
aller - infinitive	98
si - imperfect + conditional	85
il faut que + subjunctive	101
s'il veut + infinitive	100
venir + de + infinitive	1
possessive pronouns	27
il doit + infinitive	96
definite article for generalization	183
partitive article	167

All the items testing structure are found in Senior French.

<u>Culture</u>	
Chute de l'empire Romain	68
Clovis	66
Colbert	209
Corneille	212
Découverte de l'Amérique	68
De Gaulle	360
Gaulois	65
Guillaume le Conquérant	66



Jeanne d'Arc	135
Jules César	65
Louis XIV	210
Moyen Age	68
Renaissance	65
Vercingétorix	65

All the components of the items testing culture are found in Senior French.

## 2.2 EMPIRICAL VALIDITY

Empirical validity depends on the correlation of the scores obtained on a test and some outside criterion such as the marks given by a teacher during a certain period of time for tests measuring the same skill. This validity is also called concurrent validity. In the present study the empirical validity of the test was calculated for a group of eighty-four students of Ross Sheppard Composite High School of Edmonton.

Their marks for audio-comprehension tests during 1965 were computed and the means obtained were compared to their Audio- Comprehension Departmental Examination means. Such a comparison has its limitations as it depends on the reliability of both the test and the marks given by the teacher. It follows that the more reliable the test and the more reliable the marks given by the teacher, the higher will be the maximum validity which the test can



show empirically.<sup>18</sup>

It should be noted that the eighty four students chosen came from twelve classrooms and were taught French by five different teachers of French. This diversity of selection reduces the effects of differences in student achievement and teaching approaches.

A correlation of 0.683 was found between the mean audio-comprehension marks for the year and the scores on the instrument. It may be considered as quite satisfactory in view of the many sources of variance which can cause differences between the yearly results and the departmental examination results. It is interesting to quote Adams who says:

Validity coefficient as high as .60 with freshman grade-point average are obtained under favorable conditions (that is, when college students follow a relatively uniform academic program, when college grades are based on extensive information about student performance, when grading standards are fairly consistent from one instructor to another, and when almost all students are working at a relatively high level of motivation).<sup>19</sup>

Figure I shows that the year's results and the examination results follow the same general pattern; however, there is more consistency in the examination results. The peak for the instrument in the 71-75 range is attained by fifteen students against a peak in the 61-65 range on the year's marks attained by twenty five students.

The comparison of the two curves also shows that the results of the final examination were generally higher



than those of the year.

It should further be noted that the lowest marks for the examination in the 51-55 range were attained by two students, whereas during the year one student obtained a mark in the 41-45 range. Six students attained marks in the 96-100 range on the examination and marks in the 86-90 range for the year.

In order to guarantee the objectivity of the instrument, it was administered to graduate students proficient in French and their mean score was over ninety per cent of the perfect score. It was also administered to third year university students, majoring in French and their mean score was also above ninety per cent of the maximum.



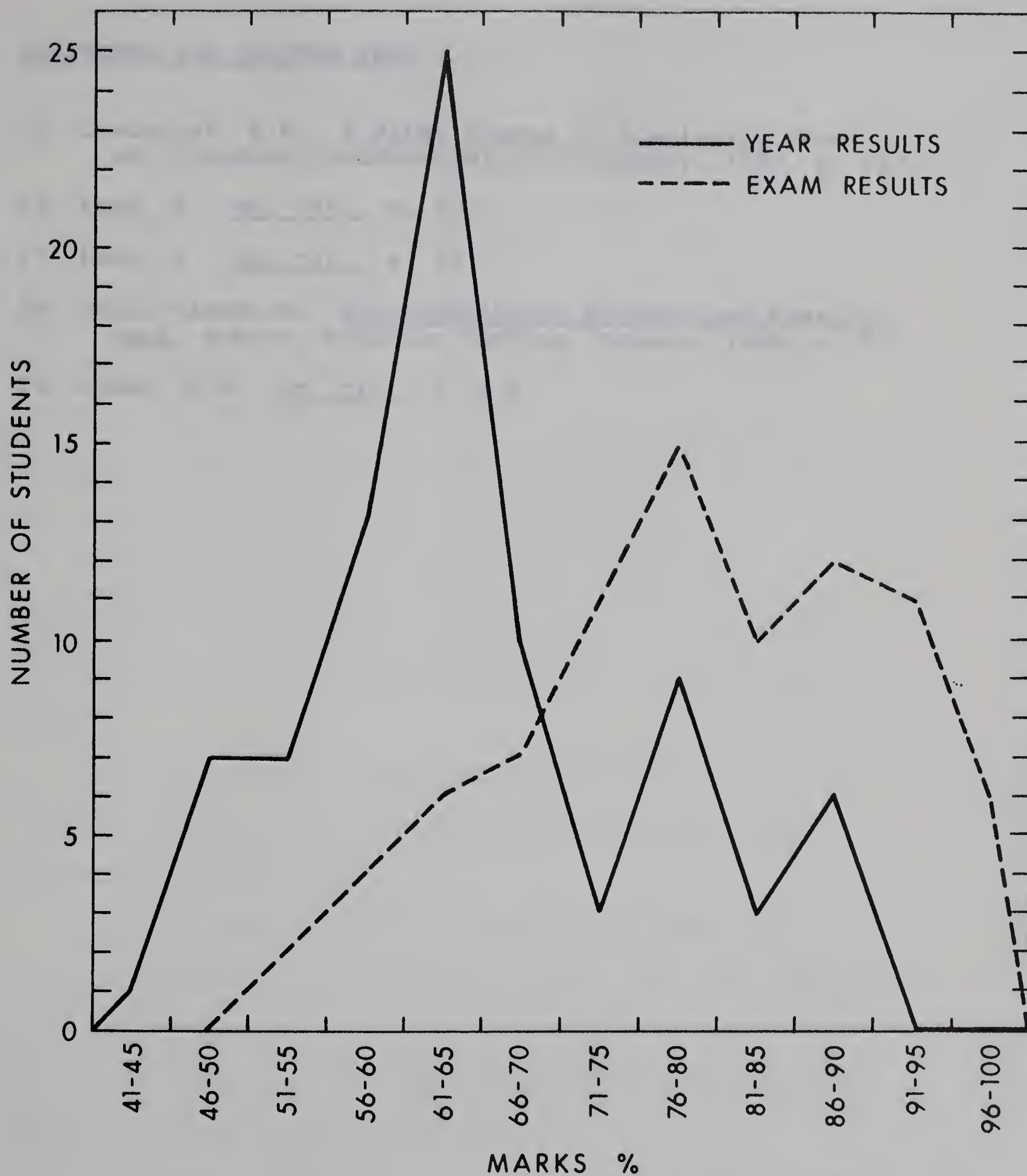


FIGURE I. AUDIO COMPREHENSION RESULTS BASED ON YEAR'S WORK COMPARED WITH RESULTS ON THE INSTRUMENT



# FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO.

15. Lindquist, E.F. A First Course in Statistics (rev. ed.), Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942, p. 213.
16. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 20.
17. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 30.
18. Noll, Victor H. Introduction to Educational Measurement, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965, p. 81.
19. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 171.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RELIABILITY AND GENERAL STATISTICS

#### 3.1 RELIABILITY

Lado suggests four methods which may be used in determining the reliability of a test: the retesting method, the alternate forms method, the chance half method, and the inter-item consistency method.<sup>20</sup> For this investigation the following were chosen:

a) The test-retest method which yields the correlation of the results obtained by the same student in the first and the second administration of the same test;

b) The internal consistency method which involves a study of inter-item consistency by using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20.

One hundred and eighty Grade XII students in two city high schools were examined twice. The first administration of the test was given at the end of the second term, the retest took place at the time of the general Departmental Examination for Grade XII.

During the 1964-65 period the examinees were taught by various teachers, with different backgrounds, using different methods. In Ross Sheppard Composite High School some audio-comprehension tests had been administered



previously to the instrument under study; none were administered in Strathcona Senior High School.

### 3.1.1 TEST AND RETEST METHOD

The coefficient of reliability obtained was .805. This coefficient of reliability measures error variance due to temporal variation in the characteristics of the examinees<sup>21</sup> - such as the effect of memory, posterior discussion among students, motivation and/or anxiety - as well as variations in conditions of test administration such as students occupying different seats on the test and retest, disturbing elements such as noise and intervening instruction.<sup>22</sup> This is why Lado says: "We may therefore find advantage in a method that eliminates such variables..."<sup>23</sup>

Noll confirms this statement and suggests that: "Whenever the self-correlation (test-retest) is used, it is particularly important to use a test of adequate length and to provide an interval of several days between successive testings..."<sup>24</sup> For the instrument under study, an interval of two weeks was observed between the test and retest and fifty items were tested in twenty minutes.

To illustrate how the data on the items were studied, figures relative to item one of the instrument are shown below:



TABLE I

## TEST AND RETEST RESULTS ON ITEM ONE

Admini- stration	Total no. students	Keyed Response	No. students who chose each alternative					Difficulty Level
			1	2	3	4	None	
First	182	3	29	16	107	16	14	.588
Second	180	3	29	17	125	8	1	.694

It appears that the coefficient of difficulty varied from .588 for the first administration to .694 for the second one. The difficulty of an item is defined as the proportion of correct responses to the total number of students taking the test.

TABLE II shows the performance of the different categories of achievers on item one. Students were placed in those categories according to their general achievement on the test; category 5 grouping the highest achievers, and category 1 the lowest.

These figures show an improved performance for all categories but one on the retest. The same trend can be observed for forty eight items out of forty nine composing the instrument.



TABLE II

PERFORMANCE BY ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL ON THE  
TEST AND RETEST - ITEM ONE

Category		Number of students who chose the correct alternative	
		Test	Retest
Highest achievers	5	30	33
	4	22	28
	3	18	20
	2	21	20
	1	16	24
Total number of students		<u>107</u>	<u>125</u>

The following diagram confirms the conclusion that the students' results on the test were poorer and more irregular than in the retest.



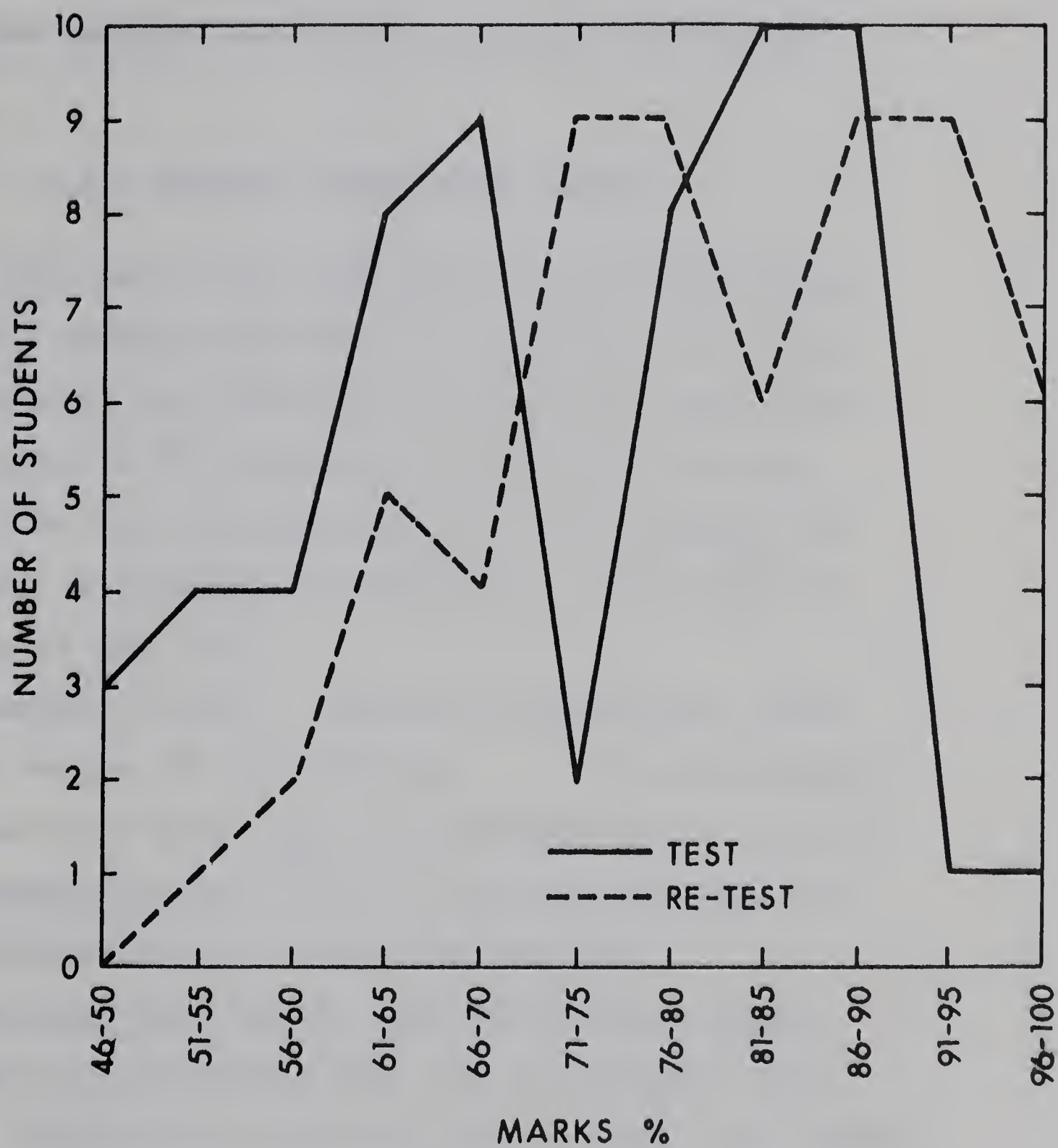


FIGURE II. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TEST-RETEST RESULTS



Because of the restrictions concerning the reliability obtained through the test-retest method, this instrument was further analysed through the internal consistency method.

### 3.1.2 INTERNAL CONSISTENCY METHOD

In this method the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 was used. This formula estimates the reliability of a test on the basis of its difficulty level and the consistency of the scores of all students for a majority of items.

In the first administration of the instrument the coefficient of reliability obtained was .7922, while in the second it was .7915.

According to Lado: "Auditory comprehension tests are often in the .80 and .89 range . . . The reliability coefficient of a given test is considered high or low not only according how near it is to 1.00 but also according to how difficult it is to test that activity . . . In general written tests may be expected to show a higher coefficient of reliability than oral and auditory tests . . ."<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that this was the first French Audio-Comprehension Examination in this province and therefore the reliabilities of .7922 and .7915 may be considered as quite satisfactory.



### 3.2 GENERAL STATISTICS CONCERNING THE INSTRUMENT

#### 3.2.1 LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Ebel says that there is a close relationship between the difficulty of a test item and "its contribution to test reliability".<sup>26</sup> Items which are answered correctly by all examinees or missed by all do not contribute to reliability. It is those items which secure from twenty-five to seventy-five per cent correct response which are capable of "contributing to test reliability".<sup>27</sup>

In order to establish the distribution of levels of difficulty of the forty-nine items of the instrument, responses made by a sample of one thousand students chosen at random throughout the province were compiled. TABLE III, below, summarizes the results.

TABLE III

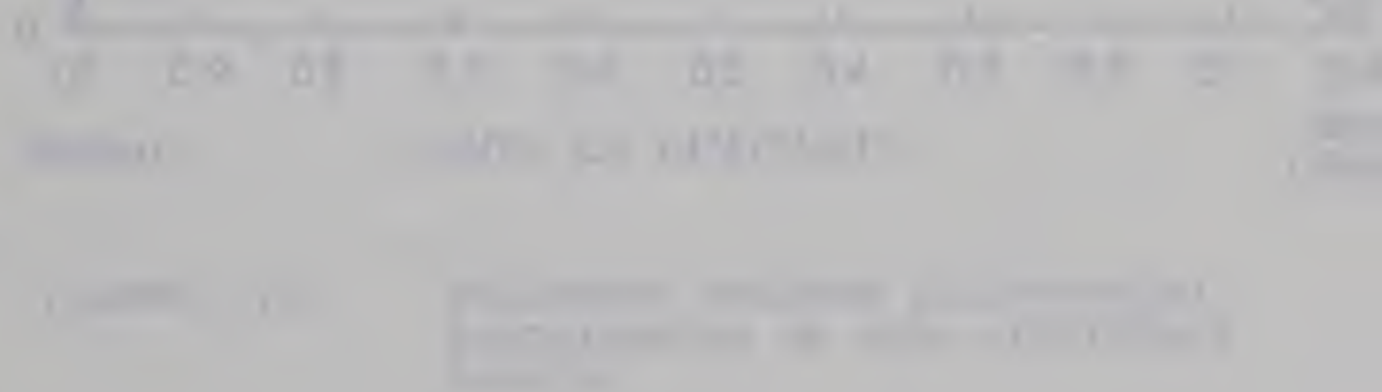
#### CLASSIFICATION OF ITEMS BY LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

<u>Level of difficulty</u>	<u>Number of items</u>
0.900 - 1.000 (easy items)	3
0.800 - 0.899	6
0.700 - 0.799	7
0.600 - 0.699	8
0.500 - 0.599	9
0.400 - 0.499	8
0.300 - 0.399	2
0.200 - 0.299	5
0.100 - 0.199	1
0.000 - 0.099 (difficult items)	0



The above figures show that 17 items are located at a level of difficulty between 0.500 and 0.699 with 16 items situated between 0.700 and 1.000, and 16 items situated between 0.100 and 0.499. Knowing that the easiest items are located between 0.900 and 1.000 and the most difficult items between 0.000 and 0.099, it should be noted that 69% of the items were located between 0.300 and 0.799. More than 70% of the item difficulties are in the .25 to .75 range suggested by Ebel.

FIGURE III gives further evidence that most of the items have a level of difficulty varying between 0.9 and 0.4.





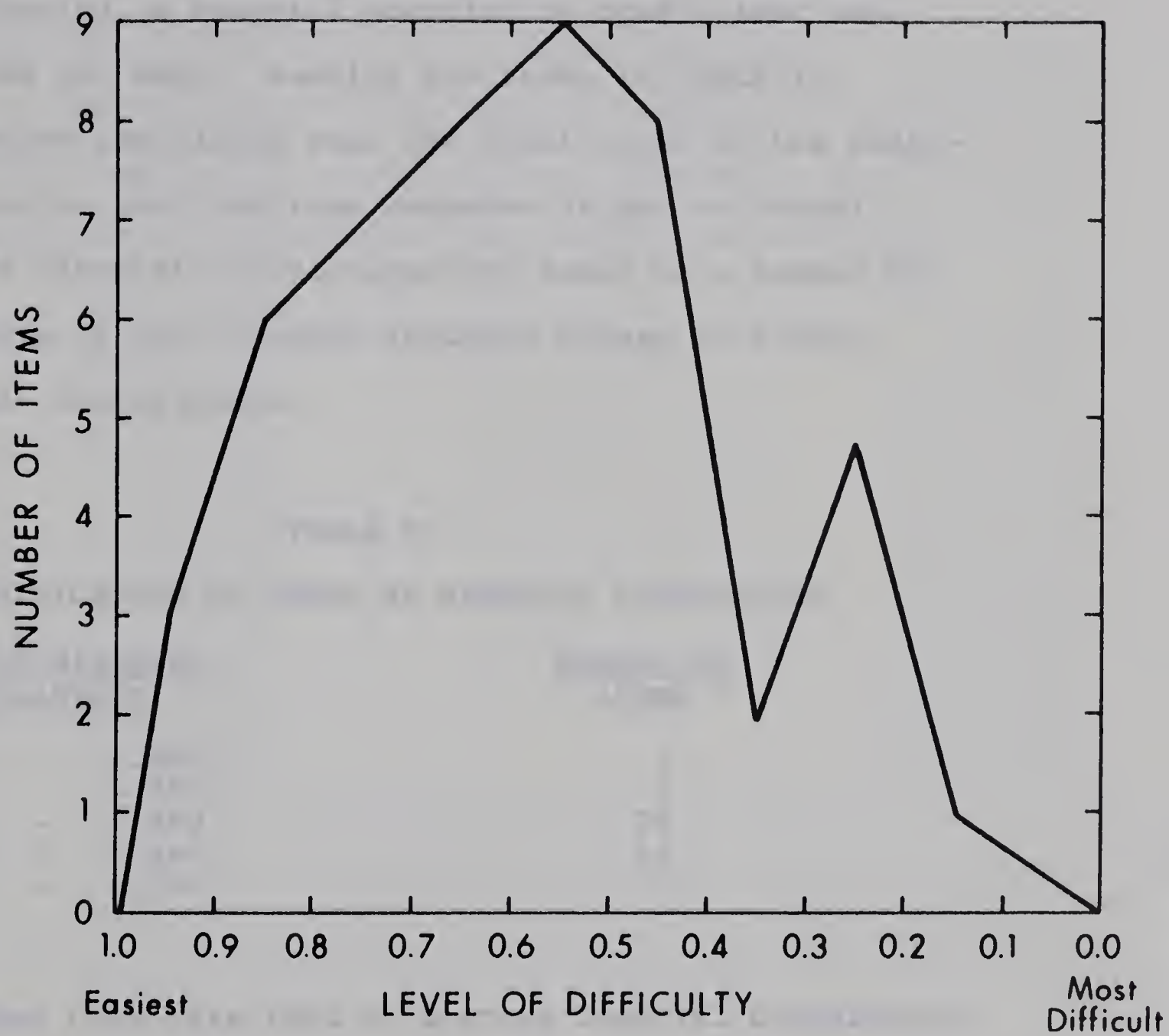


FIGURE III. FREQUENCY POLYGON ILLUSTRATING DISTRIBUTION OF ITEM DIFFICULTY LEVELS



### 3.2.2 BISERIAL CORRELATION

In order to find out how many items were really discriminating, a biserial correlation coefficient was calculated for each. Results are shown in TABLE IV.

The measures correlated were the total score on the audio-comprehension test and item response (right or wrong).

The biserial correlations are based on a sample of the results of one thousand students chosen at random throughout the province.

TABLE IV

#### CLASSIFICATION OF ITEMS BY BISERIAL CORRELATION

<u>Scale of Biserial</u> <u>Correlation</u>			<u>Number of</u> <u>items</u>
0.800	-	1.000	0
0.600	-	0.799	1
0.400	-	0.599	28
0.200	-	0.399	19
0.000	-	0.199	1

Adams considers that an average biserial correlation of .4 is adequate.<sup>28</sup> The average of the above figures is .42.

### 3.2.3 JUDGING ITEMS BY LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY AND BISERIAL CORRELATION

An item is usually judged highly satisfactory if the difficulty is in the middle range and if the discrimination



level is not too low. FIGURE IV, which classifies items by difficulty level and discrimination, indicates the region in which items were considered satisfactory. A biserial correlation of .3 or greater and a difficulty level of .4 - .7 range were the criteria used for making a decision. Thirty-nine items out of forty-nine are located in the regions defined as "acceptable" and "highly satisfactory".





BISERIAL CORRELATION	0.900-0.999									
	0.800-0.899									
	0.700-0.799				1					
	0.600-0.699						1			
	0.500-0.599									
	0.400-0.499									
	0.300-0.399									
	0.200-0.299									
	0.100-0.199									
	0.000-0.099									
	0.000-0.099	0.100-0.199	0.200-0.299	0.300-0.399	0.400-0.499	0.500-0.599	0.600-0.699	0.700-0.799	0.800-0.899	0.900-0.999

FIGURE IV. ILLUSTRATION OF METHOD USED IN JUDGING ITEMS ON BASIS OF DIFFICULTY LEVEL AND BISERIAL CORRELATION



#### 3.2.4 ARITHMETIC MEAN

This mean was found through analysing the same sample of students in the province, namely the one thousand students chosen at random to study biserial correlation and level of difficulty.

The mean score achieved by the sample was 28.77 of a possible 49 items. The average difficulty of the whole test was .59.

Ebel says that if a multiple choice item contains five alternative responses, it can be considered as of medium difficulty if sixty per cent of the examinees answer it correctly.<sup>29</sup>

#### 3.2.5 STANDARD DEVIATION

The standard deviation was 6.99. It was found by taking the square root of the instrument variance which was 48.93. This figure was calculated for the one thousand student results mentioned above.

#### Summary.

All the results mentioned in this chapter show that the instrument under study has a satisfactory reliability.

The test-retest reliability coefficient of .805 was corroborated by the internal consistency reliability coefficient which was of .792. This correlation is very



close to .8 which Lado considers satisfactory.<sup>30</sup>

The level of difficulty showed that out of 49 items, 17 were situated between .50 and .69, whereas 16 were between .70 and 1.00 and the 16 others were between .00 and .49; this partition into three almost equal parts, one average, one easy and one more difficult is one of the signs of a well constructed test.

The biserial correlation showing that 47 items out of 49 are concentrated between .20 and .59 is also very satisfactory.

Finally calculations showed a mean achievement of .59 of the maximum score which indicates a tendency of the test to be easy rather than difficult. This can be considered as good, because the test was administered throughout the province without any preparation of the students for this type of instrument.



FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE.

20. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 332.
21. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 85.
22. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 334.
23. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 333.
24. Noll, Victor H. op. cit., p. 89.
25. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 332.
26. Ebel, R.L. op. cit., p. 339.
27. Ebel, R.L. op. cit., p. 339.
28. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 355.
29. Ebel, R.L. op. cit., p. 167.
30. Lado, R. op. cit., p. 332.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### OTHER CRITERIA FOR THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT INSTRUMENT

#### 4.1 SCORABILITY

The instrument was a valid objective test as one alternative only could be chosen as a correct answer. The disposition of the alternatives on each page of the examination booklet allowed the use of a grid which helped greatly to increase the scorability of the test. This test could easily be machine scored.

According to Chauncey and Dobbin, "It does not matter much how a test is scored, so long as the scoring is accurate, fast and inexpensive."<sup>31</sup> These qualities were evidenced in scoring the instrument.

From the above it may be deduced that the scorability of the test is well established.

#### 4.2 ADMINISTRABILITY

The following statements were used as bases for evaluating the administrability of the instrument. Adams says that: "A number of factors affect ease of administration - the clarity of instructions to examiners and subjects, the adequacy of sample exercises, and the requirement of close timing..."<sup>32</sup> Chauncey and Dobbin add: "...Ease of



administration means that the student can demonstrate his knowledge or ability with a minimum of gadgetery and interruption according to concise directions that both he and the examiner understand."<sup>33</sup>

The instrument under study appeared to meet the requirements mentioned by Adams, Chauncey, and Dobbin. The directions were clear and expressed briefly. No examiner reported any difficulty on the part of the students to understand them. This is very important because if the contrary had occurred "the test would not be sufficiently standardized".<sup>34</sup>

The examination was contained in a four-page booklet. Each page corresponded to one of the four parts. In each part the same pattern was followed: first the instructions in English, second the examples, third the items and the alternatives with the corresponding letters to be checked.

The examples were chosen so as to resemble the questions proper. In the first part two examples were given, each illustrating a different type of response. In the successive part one example only was given. This policy is in agreement with Adams' recommendation that "Adequate sample exercises are essential. If the type of items is familiar to students, one sample exercise may be sufficient; if the type of item is unfamiliar or if the directions are complex, more than one example should be given."<sup>35</sup> No complaints by examiners or students were



recorded on this subject.

Each item was said only once. The fifty items were subdivided as follows: part one contained thirteen items, so did part two; part three contained twelve items, and part four originally contained twelve but one was invalidated by a typographical error.

The disposition of each item on the page was clear, though the tandem format consisting of two alternatives A and B on one line and C and D on another could be perfected. One line for each alternative would be clearer.

As far as reception of the oral message was concerned, the survey made among examiners and examinees shows a disparity of opinions. Some did not like having to listen to a female and a male voice, some preferred the male voice, others the female voice. Many attacked the unique enunciation of the questions and urged that this be revised and that following tests have the questions or leads repeated twice.

Instead of having to answer on separate answer sheets, students were asked to check one of the letters A, B, C, D which they saw on the left of the alternatives. Ebel finds some advantages to this type of organization: "...recording answers in the test booklet has several slight advantages. The student's task is a bit simpler and the danger of errors in recording responses is a bit less... Space for the answers should be provided near one



margin of the test pages..."<sup>36</sup>

The speakers, native teachers of French, were generally considered as speaking clearly and were well understood.

It follows from the above that the instructions, format, and audibility were satisfactory; therefore, the test may be considered as administrable.

#### 4.3 ECONOMY

The economy of a test is generally checked by comparing the number of items which are tested with the time allotted to the test. The instrument under study was composed of fifty items divided into four parts, each introduced by instructions and examples. It was administered in exactly twenty minutes. The generally accepted opinion is that forty items in twenty minutes for an oral test is a satisfactory proportion.

The decision to have fifty items composing the instrument seems to be in agreement with Ebel's assertion that: "If the rate of question presentation is rapid, more questions can be asked and more reliable scores obtained in a given testing period..."<sup>37</sup> Thus it seems that the economy of the present instrument may be considered satisfactory. Students of a second language should not be rushed by a too speedy succession of questions



and fifty items in twenty minutes would appear to be a satisfactory partition of questions in the given time.



# FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR.

31. Chauncey, Henry and Dobbin, John E. Testing: Its Place in Education Today, New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963, p. 76.
32. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 166.
33. Chauncey, H. and Dobbin, J.E. op. cit., p. 75.
34. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 166.
35. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 166.
36. Ebel, R.L. op. cit., p. 213.
37. Ebel, R.L. op. cit., p. 202.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions which may be drawn from the preceding study are the following:

a) The content validity of the instrument can be considered as satisfactory because 87% of the items were in the Grade XII material. Furthermore, language problems were tested in sufficient context.

b) The coefficient of empirical validity .683, according to Adams<sup>38</sup>, may also be considered as satisfactory. The comparison of the year results to those obtained on the instrument shows a consistent parallelism, the examination results being superior to those of the year.

c) The reliability of the instrument was satisfactory as the test-retest reliability coefficient of .805 was corroborated by the internal consistency reliability coefficient of .792. The distribution of items, according to the coefficient of the level of difficulty, showed that the items fell in three parts: sixteen easy items, seventeen of medium difficulty, and sixteen difficult ones. Finally the correlation between the coefficient of difficulty and the coefficient of biserial correlation showed that twenty two out of forty



nine items were high discriminators.

d) The instrument proved to be scorable as there was but one possible answer for each item and students answered simply by checking the letter corresponding to the correct answer.

e) The administrability of the test was evidenced as the instructions were clear and concise, the examples sufficient, the techniques used not too varied, and the recording found satisfactory.

f) The instrument can be termed economical as it is composed of fifty items tested in the time allotted to the audio-comprehension, namely twenty minutes. The recommended number of items for that time is forty items.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the writer's experience administering and evaluating this test:

1. Each audio-discriminatory problem should be tested three or four times in the same test in order to determine whether students really recognize specific French phonemes.

2. Audio-comprehension problems should stress the understanding of structures rather than the knowledge of vocabulary.

3. Items testing usage of verb tenses and verb inflexions should be preponderant as they are the core of



the language.

4. Each problem should be presented in a context that makes it meaningful. However, this context must be sufficiently clear and succinct to avoid either confusing the student or requiring excessive listening time.

5. The knowledge of culture would be tested more efficiently in the written examination. This aspect of learning does not rest on audio-comprehension.

6. Special consideration should be given to the choice of items testing audio-comprehension. Too often these problems are confused with either written or oral production problems.

7. The tapes should be recorded with utmost care, in the best possible conditions, that is, in a sound-proof studio, with first quality recording equipment, and a sound technician.

8. When recording, special attention should be given to the amount of time between questions, so that just enough time is provided for the choice of correct alternatives.

9. School Administrators and teachers should be made aware of the necessity of testing the equipment beforehand, insuring the best possible conditions of emission and reception.

10. The answer sheets should be devised in such a way that students lose no time in giving their answers and markers no time in correcting the papers.



### 5.3 SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions for further research stem from the work done in this study:

1. That a study be made on the influence of language laboratory work on the results of audio-comprehension examinations.
2. That a comparison be made of the results obtained on a provincial examination by students having had training with the audio-visual method of Saint Cloud, "Voix et Images de France", through three years of Junior High School with the results obtained by the students of the province at large.
3. That the results on a French audio-comprehension examination of rural students and city students be compared.
4. That a study be made to prepare a French audio-comprehension test which would be valid both for English and French speaking Canadians.
5. That a study be made to compare the amount of vocabulary tested in a departmental examination with the amount of vocabulary learned from Grade X to Grade XII.
6. That a test of oral production be prepared, and administered as a pilot examination, to complete the audio-comprehension examination.
7. That a comparison be made between students' achievement in audio-lingual skills and their achievement in written skills.



FOOTNOTE FOR CHAPTER FIVE.

38. Adams, G.S. op. cit., p. 171.



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## APPENDIX A

## LINGUISTIC ITEM ANALYSIS

Part One - Audio-Discrimination.

For each item of part one the three utterances heard are given in their graphemic and phonemic forms. The reader should be aware that the graphemic (written) and phonemic forms are given because certain oral differences are not noticeable in the graphemic form such as in the case of item 12.

A) Le dernier enfant.            / lə dɛr njɛ rɑ̃fɑ̃ /

B) La dernière enfant.            / la dɛr njɛ rɑ̃fɑ̃ /

C) La dernière enfant.            / la dɛr njɛ rɑ̃fɑ̃ /

In the above example it may appear that there are two signals which help to hear the difference between these two utterances. In fact "dernier" in front of a vowel is pronounced exactly like the feminine "dernière" so that the whole problem of recognition of a masculine or a feminine lies on the differentiating of the /ə/ and the /ɑ/ in an unaccented position. This is a definite problem of perception for Anglophones and therefore this question is a valid one.

For items one to thirteen, students were to check the letter A, B or C corresponding to the alternative differing from the others. D was to be checked when the three utterances were different. In this study the correct



alternative for each item is underlined.

Under "Distribution" the percentage of students choosing any one alternative is indicated. 0 corresponds to the percentage of students who made no choice.

	<u>Phonemics</u>	<u>Distribution</u>	
Item 1. A) Il m'a conduit	/il ma k <sup>h</sup> dyi/	16	A
B) Il m'a conduit.	/il ma k <sup>h</sup> dyi/	9	B
C) <u>Il m'a conduite.</u>	/il ma k <sup>h</sup> dyit/	69	<u>C</u>
		5	D
		1	0

C is different from the two other utterances because of the final sounded /t/. It is a relatively easy problem of audio-discrimination but an important one as it is the only evidence in this utterance that "m'" is a feminine pronoun. That about 30% of the students did not detect this difference may be explained by the fact that it was the first item of the test. Speakers of English are not accustomed to paying attention to this type of acoustic signal, and it takes some training to overcome the interference of habits acquired in the mother tongue. "Il m'a conduit" corresponds to a masculine direct object; "Il m'a conduite" corresponds to a feminine direct object.

Item 2. A) Il l'a pris.	/il la pri/	0	A
B) <u>Il l'a prise.</u>	/il la priz/	88	<u>B</u>
C) Il l'a pris.	/il la pri/	1	C
		11	D
		0	0



B differs from the two other utterances as the final /z/ is sounded. The position of the problem in the second utterance and in the last syllable seems to have been especially easy. A group of students chose solution D; this may be due to a very short memory span: A and B sound different, so do B and C. Understanding might also have complicated the issue if students interpreted the utterance as being: "Il l'apprit", "Il l'a prise", "Il la prit". The high percentage of correct responses on this item seems to confirm the hypothesis that the first item came as a surprise.

Item 3. A) <u>Voilà un beau</u> <u>gâteau.</u>	/vwa la œ̃ bo ga to/	82	<u>A</u>
B) Voilà un beau cadeau.	/vwa la œ̃ bo ka do/	8	B
C) Voilà un beau cadeau.	/vwa la œ̃ bo ka do/	5	C
		4	D
		1	0

A is different from the two other utterances because of the dual differentiation of the voiceless /k/ and the voiced /g/ as well as between the voiceless /t/ and the voiced /d/. The high percentage of correct answers may be explained by the presence of two problems which made it easier to recognize each of these utterances as distinct from the other.

Item 4. A) J'ai un billet.	/ʒe œ̃ bi jɛ/	1	A
B) J'eus un billet.	/ʒy œ̃ bi jɛ/	1	B
C) J'ai eu un billet.	/ʒe y œ̃ bi jɛ/	0	C



98 D

0 0

D indicates that the three utterances are different.

The difference between the two front sounds /e/ and /y/ was well perceived. Because of the equal beat of syllables in French all students detected that C was unlike A and B.

Item 5. A) J'ai dix amis. /ʒe di za mi/ 0 A

B) J'ai deux amis. /ʒe dø za mi/ 22 B

C) J'ai des amis. /ʒe de za mi/ 1 C

77 D

0 0

D indicates that the three utterances are different.

22% of the students chose answer B showing that they did not distinguish between the two front vowels /i/ and /e/. Each of these vowel sounds has a special quality in French which escapes the English ear. The French rounded vowel sound /ø/ was perceived as different from the two front non-rounded vowels /i/ and /e/.

Item 6. A) Nous entendons le /nu zɑ̃ tɑ̃ dɔ̃lkɔ̃ sɛr/ 0 A  
concert.

B) Nous entendons le /nu zɑ̃ tɑ̃ dɔ̃lkɔ̃ sɛr/ 0 B  
concert.

C) Nous entendions le /nu zɑ̃ tɑ̃ dʝɔ̃ lkɔ̃ sɛr/ 97 C  
concert.

3 D

0 0

The sound /j/ in C is generally difficult to perceive. Its position after a dental makes it even more difficult; however students proved their ability to choose the correct



answer C.

Item 7. A) <u>Je suis près d'eux.</u>	/ʒə syi prɛ dø/	97	<u>A</u>
B) Je suis perdu.	/ʒə syi pɛr dy/	3	B
C) Je suis perdu.	/ʒə syi pɛr dy/	0	C
		0	D
		0	0

A is different from the two other utterances. This item includes two problems: a) the discrimination between two front rounded vowels which do not exist in English: /y/ and /ø/, b) the discrimination between the distribution of consonant sounds in the syllables /pɛr/ and /prɛ/. The presence of these two auditory problems may have simplified the discrimination problem, though English speaking students are not always sensitive to the French /r/.

Item 8. A) Nous montons la montagne.	/nu mɔ̃ tɔ̃ la mɔ̃ taʃ/	3	A
B) Nous montrons la montagne.	/nu mɔ̃ trɔ̃ la mɔ̃ taʃ/	2	B
C) Nous montrerons la montagne.	/nu mɔ̃ trə rɔ̃ la mɔ̃ taʃ/	14	C
		81	<u>D</u>
		0	0

D indicates that the utterances were different. 14% of the students did not hear the difference between the first two utterances and only perceived the presence of the /r/ when it was doubled as in "nous montrerons". The differentiation of "montons" and "montrons" is an important phonemic one as it makes the difference between a present and a future tense. Empirical observation shows that



Anglophones often do not hear the French /r/ in certain distribution which is evidenced in this item.

Item 9. A) Ce train est long.	/sə trɛ̃ ɛ lɔ̃/	1	A
B) Ce train est long.	/sə trɛ̃ ɛ lɔ̃/	0	B
C) <u>Ce train est lent.</u>	/sə trɛ̃ ɛ lɑ̃	96	<u>C</u>
		3	D
		0	0

C is different from the other utterances. The distinction between nasal vowels is a problem and the differentiation between /ɔ̃/ and /ɑ̃/ is often missed. In this specific case the speaker overemphasized the difference invalidating this item.

Item 10. A) <u>Qui est-ce qui</u>	/ki ɛs ki pas/	94	<u>A</u>
<u>passe?</u>			
B) Qu'est-ce qui se	/kɛs ki spas/	3	B
<u>passe?</u>			
C) Qu'est-ce qui se	/kɛs ki spas/	0	C
<u>passe?</u>			
		3	D
		0	0

A is different from the two other utterances. The signals which convey the difference are: /ki/ opposed to /kɛs/, and /kipas/ opposed to /kispas/. This dual signalization may have helped students to make a correct choice.

Item 11. A) <u>Il m'a dit oui.</u>	/il ma di wi/	99	<u>A</u>
B) Il me dit oui.	/il mɔ di wi/	1	B
C) Il me dit oui.	/il mɔ di wi/	0	C
		0	D
		0	0



A is different from the two other utterances. The fact that the /a/ of "m'a dit oui" is accented may have made this question too easy.

Item 12. A) <u>Le dernier enfant.</u>	/lə dəʁ njɛ rɑ̃fɑ̃/	81	<u>A</u>
B) La dernière enfant.	/la dəʁ njɛ rɑ̃fɑ̃/	10	B
C) La dernière enfant.	/la dəʁ njɛ rɑ̃fɑ̃/	4	C
		5	D
		0	0

A is different from the two other utterances. The only signal which indicates the gender of "enfant" is the /ə/ opposed to the /a/ of the article. Neither of these sounds is in an accented position; in English, students are not accustomed to listen for this type of signal and did not hear the difference between the /ə/ and the unaccented /a/.

Item 13. A) Il vient ce soir.	/il vjɛ̃ sə swar/	22	A
B) Ils viennent ce soir.	/il vjɛn sə swar/	9	B
C) Ils viennent s'asseoir.	/il vjɛn sa swar/	17	C
		52	<u>D</u>
		0	0

D signifies that the three utterances are different. The first difficulty consists in differentiating a nasal vowel /ɛ̃/ from its oral counterpart /ɛ/ followed by a nasal consonant /n/. Students do not have to make this type of distinction at the phonemic level in English. In this specific case it signals the difference between the



singular and plural form of the verb. The second difficulty lies in the contrast, in an unaccented position, of the /ə/ sound and the /a/. This is an important phonemic difference; here it makes the difference between /sə swar/ (tonight), and /sa swar/ (to sit down). From the distribution it appears that most of the students concentrated their attention on the difference between /ɛ̃/ and /ɛ/ but not on that between /ə/ and /a/.

#### Parts Two, Three and Four - Audio-Comprehension.

For each item the graphemic and phonemic transcriptions of the oral utterance are given.

The four alternatives found on the student's answer sheet are also given; their phonemic form is not given even though at times it too played a role in directing the student's choice.

As for part one, the correct alternative is underlined and the percentage of students choosing an answer is found under "Distribution".

#### Vocabulary.

Item 1 (14 of the test).

Pourquoi Pauline est-elle fatiguée?  
/Pur kwa po lin ɛt ɛl fa ti ge/

Distribution

- |  |    |          |
|--|----|----------|
| A) Parce qu'elle n'a pas fait ses devoirs.       | 7  | A        |
| B) Parce qu'elle a joué aux cartes.              | 4  | B        |
| C) Parce qu'elle a regardé la télévision.        | 8  | C        |
| D) <u>Parce qu'elle s'est couchée trop tard.</u> | 80 | <u>D</u> |



1 0

The vocabulary item tested is "fatiguée", it is found in the question. None of the alternatives should be a problem for a Grade XII student. The reading problem is reduced to a minimum.

Item 2 (15 of the test).

Qu'est-ce qu'un commerçant?

/kɛs kœ̃ kɔ̃ mɛr sɑ̃/

- |   |    |          |
|---|----|----------|
| A) C'est un employé des postes.                 | 4  | A        |
| B) C'est un avocat.                             | 4  | B        |
| C) <u>C'est un homme qui fait des affaires.</u> | 87 | <u>C</u> |
| D) C'est un client.                             | 4  | D        |

1 0

The distractors may be considered as not having been effective except for those students who did not understand "commerçant".

Item 3 (16 of the test).

Que fait le facteur?

/Kə fɛl fak toer/

- |                                   |    |          |
|-----------------------------------|----|----------|
| A) Il fabrique des autos.         | 1  | A        |
| B) Il travaille dans une usine.   | 2  | B        |
| C) Il vend des cravates.          | 0  | C        |
| D) <u>Il apporte le courrier.</u> | 97 | <u>D</u> |

0 0

Again the distractors may be considered as not having been effective as 97% of the students in this investigation chose the correct alternative.



Item 4 (17 of the test).

Qu'est-ce qu'un compositeur écrit?  
/kɛs kœ kɔ̃ po zi toer e kri/

A) <u>Des symphonies.</u>	93	<u>A</u>
B) Des pièces de théâtre.	5	B
C) Des livres.	2	C
D) Des romans.	0	D
	0	0

The distractors did not seem effective. If all the students understood the word "compositeur" they did not know exactly what it meant, some of them choosing B or C.

Item 5 (27 of the test).

Lorsque votre voiture recule...  
/lɔʁskəvɔʁ vwa tyʁ ʁəkyl/

A) elle va en avant.	10	A
B) elle vire.	8	B
C) <u>elle va en arrière.</u>	30	<u>C</u>
D) elle cale	51	D
	1	0

The word "recule" is found in Senior French but not its synonym "elle va en arrière". This probably suffices to explain that only 30% of the students chose the correct answer. Answer D which attracted 50% of the answers corresponded to the "best" possible choice for those students who did not know the exact equivalent of "recule". 10% of the students confused "reculer" "to go backwards" and "avancer" corresponding to "aller en avant".



Item 6 (28 of the test).

Si le temps est couvert...  
/sil tã ɛ kuvar/

A) <u>il y a beaucoup de nuages.</u>	61	<u>A</u>
B) il fait du vent.	4	B
C) il fait du soleil.	0	C
D) il pleut.	35	D
	0	0

Distractor C was useless with this group of students.

Students were aware that "nuages" had a close relation with "bad weather" but 35% assimilated "cloudy weather" with "rain" (D) instead of "many clouds" (A).

Item 7 (29 of the test).

Voilà les vacances, les élèves disent...  
/vwa la le va kãs le ze lɛv diz/

A) <u>quelle chance!</u>	91	<u>A</u>
B) quel malheur!	2	B
C) tant pis!	3	C
D) quel dommage!	4	D
	0	0

The meaning of the word "vacances" was clear for a majority of the students. However 9% of the students were tempted by the other choices which proves that despite being very common expressions they were not known to the students.

Item 8 (39 of the test).

C'est une jeune fille élégante...  
/sɛtyn ʒoen fij e le gât/



A) elle dort beaucoup.	5	A
B) elle court bien.	7	B
C) <u>elle s'habille bien.</u>	88	<u>C</u>
D) elle se tient mal.	0	D
	0	0

The auditory problem was relatively simple; all students felt that the equivalent of "élégante" must include either "beaucoup" or "bien" but certainly not "mal" which shows a certain understanding; none chose "elle se tient mal".

Item 9 (40 of the test).

Je suis à la bibliothèque...

/ʒə si za la bi bljo tik/

A) j'achète des journaux.	1	A
B) <u>je lis un livre.</u>	96	<u>B</u>
C) je prends un café.	0	C
D) je vends des cahiers.	2	D
	1	0

"Bibliothèque" was well known as is proved by the 96% correct answers. The distractors alluded to the problem of "librairie" which is a bookstore.

Item 10 (41 of the test).

Hier soir, nous avons des invités...

/jɛr swar, nu za vjɔ̃ de zɛ̃ vi te/

A) Nous sommes allés nous coucher.	15	A
B) <u>Nous avons joué aux cartes.</u>	58	<u>B</u>
C) Nous avons peint le salon.	7	C
D) Nous sommes partis en voyage.	20	D
	0	0



The students (15%) who chose A understood the beginning of the sentence "hier soir" and overlooked the end; the 20% who chose completion D heard /nu za vjɔ̃/ and gathered that it was talking about "planes", the other 7% of the students did not have a clue or may have understood /de zɛ̃/ which was assimilated to /de sɛ̃/ and so they chose "peint" which is the closest choice to "dessin". This question is a difficult one and the distractors were really efficient.

This is the last of the vocabulary items, the idiomatic expressions are now going to be studied in detail.

### Idiomatic expressions.

Item 1 (18 of the test).

Pourquoi a-t-il mal à l'estomac?  
/pur kwa atil mal a les tɔ ma/

A) <u>Parce qu'il a trop mangé.</u>	95	<u>A</u>
B) Parce qu'il aime le poulet.	1	B
C) Parce qu'il a assez mangé.	4	C
D) Parce qu'il a bu du thé.	0	D
	0	0

This expression was well known as none of the distractors attracted more than 4% of the students.

Item 2 (19 of the test).

Quand les matchs de tennis ont-ils lieu?  
/kɑ le matʃ də tɛ nis ɔ̃til ljø/

A) A la campagne.	1	A
B) En ville.	7	B



C) En hiver.	0	C
D) <u>En été.</u>	92	<u>D</u>
	0	0

The expression "avoir lieu" seemed well known, as tennis can be played in town and in the country; however, the question is not "where do tennis matches take place" but rather "when do tennis matches take place". 7% of the students were attracted by the place where the matches were held.

Item 3 (20 of the test).

Qui est-ce qui fait le ménage?

/kiɛs ki fɛ lme nɑʒ/

A) C'est l'épicière.	5	A
B) <u>C'est la mère.</u>	90	<u>B</u>
C) C'est le commis.	3	C
D) C'est la dactylo.	2	D
	0	0

The expression "faire le ménage" was tested by giving only names of people susceptible of "cleaning house". "C'est l'épicière" attracted 5% of the students showing that they associated "épicière" and "ménage"; they may have confused "faire le ménage" with "articles de ménage". The distractors C and D were evidently chosen by those students who did not understand the expression "faire le ménage".

Item 4 (21 of the test).

Quand est-ce qu'on se lève de table?

/kɑ̃ ɛs kɔ̃ slɛv də tabl/



A) A la fin de la journée scolaire.	2	A
B) Au début du dîner.	12	B
C) <u>A la fin du repas.</u>	85	<u>C</u>
D) Au milieu de la nuit.	0	D
	1	0

The expression "se lever de table" which is the equivalent of "to leave the table" was fairly well known as only 2% of the students chose answer A and no one chose D. The only other possible choice, apart from the correct one, was the B which deals with a meal. The 12% of the students that chose this answer showed that they had some idea that this expression was bound to the idea of taking meals; it was confused with "aller à table" or with "se mettre à table".

Item 5 (30 of the test).

Le train se met en marche, attention...  
/lə trɛ̃ smɛ tã marʃ, a tã sjɔ̃/

A) il arrive.	10	A
B) il s'arrête.	28	B
C) <u>il part.</u>	52	<u>C</u>
D) il ralentit.	10	D
	0	0

All the distractors required an accurate knowledge of the expression "se mettre en marche", "to start". Most of the wrong choices were in favour of B "it stops" which is the opposite of "se mettre en marche". The 10%



who chose A or D proved that they knew that it was an expression indicating motion. Could it be that students reading "il part" did not recognize it as the third person singular of the verb "partir" thus missing the correct answer?

Item 6 (31 of the test).

Comme ces chaussures sont très bon marché...

/Kɔm se ʃo.syr sɔ̃ trɛ bɔ̃ mar ʃe/

- |                                    |    |          |
|------------------------------------|----|----------|
| A) je les trouve belles.           | 14 | A        |
| B) elles sont trop grandes.        | 8  | B        |
| C) elles me déplaisent.            | 3  | C        |
| D) <u>je les achète au rabais.</u> | 73 | <u>D</u> |
|                                    | 2  | 0        |

The expression "bon marché" is made up of two words "bon" and "marché" and means "cheap". Distractor A made use of the assimilation between "bon" and "belles" and 14% of the students who did not know the meaning of the expression chose this distractor. Distractors B and C did not attract as many students as they are both negative in their meaning and the lead contains "très bon" meaning "very good". Choices B and C are easy to justify if the students did not know the meaning of "au rabais" which is the synonym of "bon marché".

Item 7 (32 of the test).

J'ai tort quand je dis...

/ʒə tɔr kɑ̃ ʒ di/

- |                         |    |   |
|-------------------------|----|---|
| A) Paris est en France. | 12 | A |
|-------------------------|----|---|



B) Berlin est en Allemagne.	4	B
C) <u>Londres est en Suisse.</u>	72	<u>C</u>
D) Ottawa est au Canada.	11	D
	1	0

The distractors were chosen so as to be very obvious, actually it could be said that they give the question away as the only completion which is different from the other ones is C. However 12% of the students chose A and 11% D thus indicating a confusion of knowledge of the two opposites "avoir tort", "to be wrong" and "avoir raison", "to be right". B only attracted 4% of the answers maybe because students did not recognize "Allemagne" to be Germany.

Item 8 (42 of the test).

Elle fait la vaisselle...  
/ɛl fɛ la vɛ sɛl/

A) Elle est au jardin.	2	A
B) Elle est dans un grand magasin.	2	B
C) Elle est dans la salle de bains.	5	C
D) <u>Elle est dans la cuisine.</u>	91	<u>D</u>
	0	0

The expression "faire la vaisselle" is made up of the verb "faire" which is very commonly used in French and often confuses English speaking students. Completion A, chosen by 2% of the students, evidences the total incomprehension of this expression. Completion B chosen



by 2% of the students shows some understanding of "vaisselle" which can be purchased in a store. Completion C chosen by 5% of the students shows a closer understanding of the expression as a whole. Choice D, chosen by 91% of the students shows a good knowledge of the expression. Item 9 (43 of the test).

Nous sommes pressés...  
/nu sɔm pre se/

A) <u>Nous marchons vite.</u>	97	<u>A</u>
B) Nous avons le temps.	1	B
C) Nous marchons lentement.	2	C
D) Nous attendons.	0	D
	0	0

All the students knew that this expression was related to movement, none chose D; only 2% were attracted by the completion "nous marchons lentement", they were probably induced into this choice because of "marchons". It seems that this expression is very well known and the distractors were not too successful.

Item 10 (44 of the test).

Vous vous levez de bonne heure...  
/vu vu lve dbɔn oer/

A) Il est midi.	2	A
B) C'est un jour heureux.	8	B
C) C'est malheureux.	2	C
D) <u>Il est cinq heures du matin.</u>	87	<u>D</u>
	1	0



The expression "de bonne heure" is made up of the words "bonne", meaning "good" and "heure" meaning "time". Furthermore it sounds exactly like the word "bonheur" which means "happiness". Completion A was chosen by only 2% of the students who understood "heure" but did not know the expression "de bonne heure". The 8% who chose answer B believed they had heard the word "bonheur". The 2% who chose completion C did not have a clue of the problem. Item 11 (45 of the test).

Un agent dresse un procès verbal...  
 /œ na ʒɑ dʁɛs œ prɔsɛ vɛr bal/

A) <u>Il y a un accident.</u>	87	<u>A</u>
B) Il y a un concert.	6	B
C) Il a un chien.	0	C
D) Il répond aux questions.	7	D
	0	0

The expression "dresser un procès verbal" is not a very current expression; it required a deeper knowledge of the course content than most of the other expressions. It appears only once in the text book. The distractor C was not good as it had no relation either with the sound or the meaning of the expression. The choice by 7% of the students of distractor D shows that they had some understanding of what the "agent de police" was doing.

This is the last item corresponding to the "expressions"; the next part deals with the "grammar" content corresponding



to the Grade XII course.

### Grammar

Item 1 (22 of the test).

Si Jean ouvre la porte, direz-vous merci?  
/si ʒɑ̃ uvrəla pɔʁt, di re vu mɛʁ si/

- |                                |    |          |
|--------------------------------|----|----------|
| A) Oui, je disais merci.       | 5  | A        |
| B) Oui, je dis merci.          | 19 | B        |
| C) <u>Oui, je dirai merci.</u> | 67 | <u>C</u> |
| D) Oui, j'ai dit merci.        | 9  | D        |
|                                | 0  | 0        |

This grammatical item tested the agreement of tenses in its easiest form. The students heard a question in the future and were asked to elicit the only possible answer which was also in the future. The choice was further simplified as "direz-vous merci?" sounds exactly like the answer "oui, je dirai merci". If students were drilled in this type of oral recognition it would have been very easy for them. However 19% chose B "Je dis merci" because the beginning of the question is in the present and this is the tense with which they are most familiar. Those who chose answers A and D evidenced their incapacity to handle this type of problem.

Item 2 (23 of the test).

Cette voiture-là est-elle à toi?  
/sɛt vwa tyʁ la ɛ tɛl a twa/

- |                         |    |   |
|-------------------------|----|---|
| A) Oui, elle est à toi. | 10 | A |
|-------------------------|----|---|



B) <u>Oui, elle est à moi.</u>	87	<u>B</u>
C) Oui, elle est à lui.	1	C
D) Oui, elle est à vous.	2	D
	0	0

Most of the students made the correct choice.

Those 10% who chose answer A were attracted by the similarity between the question and the answer and hearing "toi" in the question elicited "toi" in the answer.

Item 3 (24 of the test).

Qu'allez-vous faire ce soir?  
/ka le vu fɛr sə swar/

A) <u>Nous irons au cinéma.</u>	71	<u>A</u>
B) Nous allions au cinéma.	7	B
C) Nous sommes allés au cinéma.	14	C
D) Nous irions au cinéma.	8	D
	0	0

The problem found in the stem is the near future expressed by "allez-vous faire", the equivalent of this tense is the future and therefore this tense should be used in the answer. The expression of time "ce soir" is another signal which should have guided students towards answer A as it always indicates a future. The 7% who chose B and the 14% who chose C probably confused "ce soir" with "hier soir"; they also ignored that this tense made up with "aller" is not a past. The 8% who chose D probably felt that "this was to happen" but did not know the



difference between the future and the conditional.

Item 4 (33 of the test).

Si tu avais vingt ans...

/si ty a vɛ vɛ tɑ̃/

A) tu peux voter.	17	A
B) tu pourras voter.	30	B
C) tu pouvais voter.	24	C
D) <u>tu pourrais voter.</u>	27	<u>D</u>
	2	0

Students were asked to apply the rule according to which a clause containing "si" plus an imperfect is followed by a clause containing the verb in the conditional. The distribution of the percentages answering this question incorrectly shows that they are insensitive to the perception of this "rapport". The vocabulary chosen was primary so as not to divert students' attention from the problem.

Item 5 (34 of the test).

Il faut qu'il finisse son cours...

/il fo kil fi nis sɔ̃ kur/

A) s'il voulait réussir ses examens.	16	A
B) <u>s'il veut réussir ses examens.</u>	58	<u>B</u>
C) s'il avait voulu réussir ses examens.	15	C
D) s'il a voulu réussir ses examens.	7	D
	4	0

The lead contains the present of the subjunctive; the students are to know that the following clause is to contain a verb in the present of the indicative. This is



another aspect of agreement of tenses and is also found difficult by students who do not get enough practice in using these forms which are very current after "il faut". The student percentage attracted by choices A, C and D shows that this type of concordance of the tenses is not known by the student population.

Item 6. (35 of the test).

Il devait le couper car...  
/il də vɛl ku pe kar/

A) ce serait son travail.	18	A
B) ce sera son travail.	29	B
C) <u>c'était son travail.</u>	37	<u>C</u>
D) ce fut son travail.	10	D
	6	0

This is yet another case of agreement of tenses.

"Il devait" was equated to an entity requiring a future after it. 29% chose B as an answer which contains a future and 18% chose the conditional showing that for them "il devait" implies some kind of idea of futurity.

Item 7 (46 of the test).

Cette revue vient d'arriver, ...  
/sɛt rəvy vjɛ̃ da ri ve/

A) Elle est arrivée hier.	10	A
B) Elle va arriver.	12	B
C) <u>Elle est arrivée il y a un moment.</u>	68	<u>C</u>
D) Elle arrivera demain.	9	D
	0	0



Students were asked to differentiate a recent past formed by the verb "venir" in the present of the indicative, followed by the preposition "de" and by an infinitive. The form with which this construction is most often confused is the near future which is made up of the verb "aller" in the present of the indicative followed by a verb in the infinitive. The difficulty in identifying one of these forms lies in the auditive similarity of "va" and "vient" for an untrained ear; this assumption is evidenced by the choices made by 12% of the students of the answer B and 9% of the answer D. Those 10% who chose answer A were aware of the equivalence of "vient de" with a past but not aware of its closeness in the past.

Item 8 (47 of the test).

Je vais au cinéma le jeudi...

/ʒə vɛ o si ne ma lʒø di/

A) J'y vais une fois par mois.	1	A
B) J'y vais ce jeudi.	20	B
C) J'y vais jeudi prochain.	10	C
D) <u>J'y vais tous les jeudis.</u>	68	<u>D</u>
	1	0

The construction "le jeudi" in this context makes use of the definite article in its form inferring generalization, it is the synonym of "every thursday", "tous les jeudis". 20% of the students may not have



heard the definite article in its bound form to /lʒø di/ it sounds like one word and recognizing the word "jeudi" the 20% who chose answer B and the 10% who chose answer C showed that they were aware of the meaning of futurity enclosed in the expression "je vais au cinéma jeudi". In this case the distractors were effective.

### Culture

Item 1 (25 of the test).

Qui est Corneille?

/ki ɛ kɔʁ nɛj/

A) Un grand musicien.	13	A
B) Un grand médecin.	14	B
C) <u>Un grand écrivain.</u>	57	<u>C</u>
D) Un grand chimiste.	16	D
	0	0

The 13% that chose A, the 14% that chose B and the 16% that chose D showed that they were confused by two problems: one of hearing and one of knowledge of culture.

Item 2 (26 of the test).

Qui a régné au dix septième siècle?

/ki a reʒe o di sɛ tjɛm sjɛkl/

A) Guillaume le Conquérant.	6	A
B) <u>Louis XIV.</u>	77	<u>B</u>
C) Clovis.	11	C
D) Colbert.	6	D
	0	0



Students were asked to detect the difference between "septième" (seventh) and "dix-septième" (seventeenth). This question also required knowledge of the word "régné" (to reign) which was not known as shown by the choice of 11% of the students. Distractors A and D attracted those who did not understand either of the problems and therefore chose any answer.

Item 3 (36 of the test).

Le Moyen Age est la période...  
/lɔmwa jɛn ɑʒɛ la pe rjɔd/

- |   |    |          |
|---|----|----------|
| A) entre la jeunesse et la vieillesse.                                      | 3  | A        |
| B) entre la Renaissance et Louis XIV.                                       | 12 | B        |
| C) <u>entre la chute de l'Empire Romain et la découverte de l'Amérique.</u> | 82 | <u>C</u> |
| D) entre 1850 et 1940.  | 3  | D        |
|   | 0  | 0        |

"Moyen Age" was the problem. Only three students mistook this to be the time between youth and old age. Most of the students showed they were aware that it was a problem of historical dates and evidenced their knowledge of the subject.

Item 4 (37 of the test).

Le grand héros des Gaulois fut...  
/lə grɑ̃ e ro də go lwa fy/

- |                  |    |   |
|------------------|----|---|
| A) De Gaulle     | 5  | A |
| B) Jeanne d'Arc. | 8  | B |
| C) Jules César.  | 13 | C |



D) <u>Vercingétorix</u> .	74	<u>D</u>
	0	0

The correct answer is D. Students were to recognize two words in order to answer correctly: "héros" and "Gaulois". The 5% who chose De Gaulle worked on the similitude of the sounds in "De Gaulle" and "Gaulois" without having understood anything. The 8% who chose Jeanne d'Arc assimilated her to a "héros" but did not understand "Gaulois" which makes a difference in epochs. The 11% who chose "Jules César" understood "Gaulois" but missed the word "héros", or confused the issue.

Item 5 (38 of the test).

Un vitrail c'est...  
/œ vi traj sɛ/

A) une lourde porte.	18	A
B) <u>une haute fenêtre</u> .	29	<u>B</u>
C) une tour pointue.	18	C
D) une sculpture.	32	D
	3	0

The problem was to recognize the word "vitrail" which is so frequently used when talking about the French cathedrals. Unfortunately the examiners chose the singular form of this word which only appears in the plural in the textbook. Pupils may have been confused by the different sound in the singular /vi traj/ and in the plural /vi tro/. The variety of choices made show that very few students



knew this word.

Item 6 (49 of the test).

Dans les provinces françaises il y a encore  
des foires,  
/dã le prɔ vɛ̃s frã sɛz il ja ãkɔr de fwar/

- |                                |    |          |
|--------------------------------|----|----------|
| A) <u>On y vend du bétail.</u> | 43 | <u>A</u> |
| B) On y visite des châteaux.   | 29 | B        |
| C) On y fait du vin.           | 18 | C        |
| D) On y mange des omelettes.   | 9  | D        |
|                                | 1  | 0        |

Students were to recognize the word "foires" which eliminated automatically answers B and C. The 9% who chose D showed their total misunderstanding of the question. Those who chose answers B and C understood the word "province".

Item 7 (50 of the test).

Au Canada la question du chômage est importante...  
/o ka na da la kɛs tjɔ̃ dy ʃo maʒ ɛ tɛ̃ pɔr tãt/

- |   |    |          |
|---|----|----------|
| A) C'est une division géographique.     | 8  | A        |
| B) C'est une exportation de céréales.   | 6  | B        |
| C) <u>C'est un problème économique.</u> | 86 | <u>C</u> |
| D) C'est une fusée interplanétaire.     | 0  | D        |
|   | 0  | 0        |

D is an example of a very poor distractor. It did not attract any student, it has no relation either in sound or idea with the lead. Inference A attracted many answers as it was the closest to one problem which is often



mentioned when talking about Canada. Students who understood "question" and "Canada" were tempted to choose the answer containing "céréales".



## APPENDIX B

CONTENT FOUND ON TAPE FOR THE  
FIRST FRENCH AUDIO-COMPREHENSION DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATION  
IN ALBERTA

## Part I - audio-discrimination.

For each number from 1 to 13 you will hear three word groups. If one of the three word groups is different put a mark under the letter which corresponds to it. If all three groups are different put a mark under the letter D on your answer sheet. Wait until you have heard all three word groups before putting your mark on the answer sheet. Each word group will be said once only.

- |                                    |                                  |                                   |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. A Il m'a conduit.               | B Il m'a conduit.                | C Il m'a conduite.                |
| 2. B Il l'a pris.                  | B Il l'a prise.                  | C Il l'a pris.                    |
| 3. A Voilà un beau<br>gâteau.      | B Voilà un beau<br>cadeau.       | C Voilà un beau<br>cadeau.        |
| 4. A J'ai un billet.               | B J'ai eu un billet.             | C J'eus un billet.                |
| 5. A J'ai dix amis.                | B J'ai deux amis.                | C J'ai des amis.                  |
| 6. A Nous entendons<br>le concert. | B Nous entendons<br>le concert.  | C Nous entendions<br>le concert.  |
| 7. A Je suis près<br>d'eux.        | B Je suis perdu.                 | C Je suis perdu.                  |
| 8. A Nous montons<br>la montagne.  | B Nous monterons<br>la montagne. | C Nous montrerons<br>la montagne. |
| 9. A Ce train est long.            | B Ce train est long.             | C Ce train est lent.              |
| 10. A Il m'a dit oui.              | B Il me dit oui.                 | C Il me dit oui.                  |
| 11. A Qui est-ce qui<br>passe?     | B Qu'est-ce qui<br>se passe?     | C Qu'est-ce qui<br>se passe?      |
| 12. A Le dernier<br>enfant.        | B La dernière<br>enfant.         | C La dernière<br>enfant.          |



13. A Il vient ce soir.                      B Ils viennent ce soir.                      C Ils viennent s'asseoir.

Part II - audio-comprehension (questions and answers).

For each number from 14 to 26 you will hear a question. Four possible answers appear on your answer sheet. Put a mark under the letter which corresponds to the best possible answer to the question.

14. Pourquoi Pauline est-elle fatiguée?
15. Qu'est-ce qu'un commerçant?
16. Que fait le facteur?
17. Qu'est-ce qu'un compositeur écrit?
18. Pourquoi a-t-il mal à l'estomac?
19. Quand les matchs de tennis ont-ils lieu?
20. Qui est-ce qui fait le ménage?
21. Quand est-ce qu'on se lève de table?
22. Si Jean ouvre la porte, direz-vous merci?
23. Cette voiture-là est-elle à toi?
24. Qu'allez vous faire ce soir?
25. Qui est Corneille?
26. Qui a régné au XVIIème siècle?

Part III - audio-comprehension (sentence completion).

For each number from 27 to 38 an incomplete statement will be given. Four completions appear on your answer sheet. Put a mark under the letter which corresponds to the best possible completion to the statement.

27. Lorsque votre voiture recule...
28. Si le temps est couvert...



- 29. Voilà les vacances, les élèves disent...
- 30. Le train se met en marche, attention...
- 31. Comme ces chaussures sont très bon marché...
- 32. J'ai tort quand je dis...
- 33. Si tu avais vingt ans...
- 34. Il faut qu'il finisse son cours...
- 35. Il devait le couper car...
- 36. Le Moyen Age est la période entre...
- 37. Le grand héros des Gaulois fut...
- 38. Un vitrail, c'est...

Part IV - audio-comprehension (sentence completion by inference).

For each number from 39 to 50 you will hear a statement. From your answer sheet select the one statement that is most logically deduced from the information in the statement. Put a mark under the corresponding letter.

- 39. C'est une jeune fille élégante...
- 40. Je suis à la bibliothèque...
- 41. Hier soir, nous avons des invités...
- 42. Elle fait la vaisselle...
- 43. Nous sommes pressés...
- 44. Vous vous levez de bonne heure...
- 45. Un agent dresse un procès verbal...
- 46. Cette revue vient d'arriver...
- 47. Je vais au cinéma le jeudi...
- 48. Vous le leur montrez...
- 49. Dans les provinces françaises, il y a encore des



foires...

50. Au Canada, la question du chômage est importante,...



## APPENDIX C

ANSWER SHEET FOR THE FIRST FRENCH AUDIO-COMPREHENSION  
DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATION IN ALBERTA

Part I. For each number from 1 to 13 you will hear three word groups. If one of the three word groups is different put a mark under the letter which corresponds to it. If all three groups are different put a mark under the letter D on your answer sheet. Wait until you have heard all three word groups before putting your mark on the answer sheet. Each word group will be said once only.

A B C D First Example:

A) Ma grammaire est vieille.

B) Ma grand-mère est vieille.

C) Ma grammaire est vieille.

The sentence which is different from the others is B) Ma grand-mère est vieille, so you would put a mark under B.

A B C D Second Example:

A) Ma grammaire est vieille.

B) Ma grand-mère est vieille.

C) Ma grande mère est vieille.

In this example all three groups are different, so you would put a mark under D.

A B C D No. 1

A B C D No. 2

A B C D No. 3

A B C D No. 4



A B C D No. 5

A B C D No. 6

A B C D No. 7

A B C D No. 8

A B C D No. 9

A B C D No. 10

A B C D No. 11

A B C D No. 12

A B C D No. 13

Part II. For each number from 14 to 26 you will hear a question. Four possible answers appear on your answer sheet. Put a mark under the letter which corresponds to the best possible answer to the question.

A B C D Example: Que fait un élève le lundi?

A) Il fait du ski.

B) Il fait un vol sans escale.

C) Il ne va pas à l'école.

D) Il va en classe.

The best possible answer is D) Il va en classe, so you would put a mark under D.

A B C D No. 14 A) Parce qu'elle n'a pas fait ses devoirs.

B) Parce qu'elle a joué aux cartes.

C) Parce qu'elle a regardé la télévision.

D) Parce qu'elle s'est couchée trop tard.



- A B C D No. 15 A) C'est un employé des postes.  
B) C'est un avocat.  
C) C'est un homme qui fait des affaires.  
D) C'est un client.
- A B C D No. 16 A) Il fabrique des autos.  
B) Il travaille dans une usine.  
C) Il vend des cravates.  
D) Il apporte le courrier.
- A B C D No. 17 A) Des symphonies.  
B) Des pièces de théâtre.  
C) Des livres.  
D) Des romans.
- A B C D No. 18 A) Parce qu'il a trop mangé.  
B) Parce qu'il aime le poulet.  
C) Parce qu'il a assez mangé.  
D) Parce qu'il a bu du thé.
- A B C D No. 19 A) A la campagne.  
B) En ville.  
C) En hiver.  
D) En été.
- A B C D No. 20 A) C'est l'épicière.  
B) C'est la mère.  
C) C'est le commis.  
D) C'est la dactylo.
- A B C D No. 21 A) A la fin de la journée scolaire.  
B) Au début du dîner.



C) A la fin du repas.

D) Au milieu de la nuit.

A B C D No. 22 A) Oui, je disais merci.

B) Oui, je dis merci.

C) Oui, je dirai merci.

D) Oui, j'ai dit merci.

A B C D No. 23 A) Oui, elle est à toi.

B) Oui, elle est à moi.

C) Oui, elle est à lui.

D) Oui, elle est à vous.

A B C D No. 24 A) Nous irons au cinéma.

B) Nous allions au cinéma.

C) Nous sommes allés au cinéma.

D) Nous irions au cinéma.

A B C D No. 25 A) Un grand musicien.

B) Un grand médecin.

C) Un grand écrivain.

D) Un grand chimiste.

A B C D No. 26 A) Guillaume le Conquérant.

B) Louis XIV.

C) Clovis.

D) Colbert.

Part III. For each number from 27 to 38 an incomplete statement will be given. Four completions appear on your answer sheet. Put a mark under the letter which corresponds to the best possible completion to the statement.



A B C D Example: Un élève paresseux est...

A) Celui qui fait bien ses devoirs.

B) Celui qui ne travaille pas.

C) Celui qui apprend ses leçons.

D) Celui qui écoute le professeur.

The best completion is B) Celui qui ne travaille pas,  
so you would put a mark under B.

A B C D No. 27 A) elle va en avant.

B) elle vire.

C) elle va en arrière.

D) elle cale.

A B C D No. 28 A) il y a beaucoup de nuages.

B) il fait du vent.

C) il fait du soleil.

D) il pleut.

A B C D No. 29 A) quelle chance!

B) quel malheur!

C) tant pis!

D) quel dommage!

A B C D No. 30 A) il arrive.

B) il s'arrête.

C) il part.

D) il ralentit.

A B C D No. 31 A) je les trouve belles.

B) elles sont trop grandes.

C) elles me déplaisent.

D) Je les achète au rabais.



- A B C D No. 32 A) Paris est en France.  
B) Berlin est en Allemagne.  
C) Londres est en Suisse.  
D) Ottawa est au Canada.
- A B C D No. 33 A) tu peux voter.  
B) tu pourras voter.  
C) tu pouvais voter.  
D) tu pourrais voter.
- A B C D No. 34 A) s'il voulait réussir ses examens.  
B) s'il veut réussir ses examens.  
C) s'il avait voulu réussir ses examens.  
D) s'il a voulu réussir ses examens.
- A B C D No. 35 A) ce serait son travail.  
B) ce sera son travail.  
C) c'était son travail.  
D) ce fut son travail.
- A B C D No. 36 A) entre la jeunesse et la vieillesse.  
B) entre la Renaissance et Louis XIV.  
C) entre la chute de l'Empire romain et la découverte de l'Amérique.  
D) entre 1850 et 1940.
- A B C D No. 37 A) De Gaulle.  
B) Jeanne d'Arc.  
C) Jules César.  
D) Vercingétorix.
- A B C D No. 38 A) une lourde porte.  
B) une haute fenêtre.



C) une tour pointue.

D) une sculpture.

Part IV. For each number from 39 to 50 you will hear a statement. From your answer sheet select the one statement that is most logically deduced from the information in the statement. Put a mark under the corresponding letter.

A B C D Example: Je traverse le lac.

A) Je prends un bateau.

B) Je prends un avion.

C) Je prends une auto.

D) Je prends une bicyclette.

The best possible statement is A) Je prends un bateau, so you would put a mark under A.

A B C D No. 39 A) Elle dort beaucoup.

B) Elle court bien.

C) Elle s'habille bien.

D) Elle se tient mal.

A B C D No. 40 A) J'achète des journaux.

B) Je lis un livre.

C) Je prends un café.

D) Je vends des cahiers.

A B C D No. 41 A) Nous sommes allés nous coucher.

B) Nous avons joué aux cartes.

C) Nous avons peint le salon.

D) Nous sommes partis en voyage.

A B C D No. 42 A) Elle est au jardin.



- B) Elle est dans un grand magasin.
- C) Elle est dans la salle de bains.
- D) Elle est dans la cuisine.

A B C D No. 43

- A) Nous marchons vite.
- B) Nous avons le temps.
- C) Nous marchons lentement.
- D) Nous attendons.

A B C D No. 44

- A) Il est midi.
- B) C'est un jour heureux.
- C) C'est malheureux.
- D) Il est cinq heures du matin.

A B C D No. 45

- A) Il y a un accident.
- B) Il y a un concert.
- C) Il a un chien.
- D) Il répond aux questions.

A B C D No. 46

- A) Elle est arrivée hier.
- B) Elle va arriver.
- C) Elle est arrivée il y a un moment.
- D) Elle arrivera demain.

A B C D No. 47

- A) J'y vais une fois par mois.
- B) J'y vais ce jeudi.
- C) J'y vais jeudi prochain.
- D) J'y vais tous les jeudis.

A B C D No. 48

- A) Il le voit.
- B) Ils le voient.
- C) Ils le voient.



D) Il les voit.

A B C D No. 49 A) On y vend du bétail.

B) On y visite des châteaux.

C) On y fait du vin.

D) On y mange des omelettes.

A B C D No. 50 A) C'est une division géographique.

B) C'est une exportation de céréales.

C) C'est un problème économique.

D) C'est une fusée interplanétaire.

END





**B29856**